

Local Television Ownership Limit

Docket 06-121

I am concerned with the current local television ownership limit issue. I am concerned with only allowing two locally owned television stations in a market that could have up to seventeen television stations. This will cause non-local owners to invest in a community that they are unfamiliar with. I can see this becoming an issue because the lack of knowledge the ownership will have about the needs of the public in the local market where their stations are owned. In Debora Clarke's review of "Who Owns the Media" she summarizes that the national ownership of local news stations is out of touch with the public's needs.

She also mentions that the cross-ownership of these national companies is also causing harm to the economies in which these stations are located because it is taking away from local businesses. One example of national ownership that is hurting local media outlets' opportunities is the ownership that Rupert Murdoch controls. The stations and corporations that he owns account for over 4.7 billion people receiving his stations' broadcasts according to cjr.com. Such ownership can cause one-sided media and promote propaganda and there will not be another side of the story if ownership such as Murdoch's continued to do. Another problem with this is Murdoch is reporting national news with does not apply to local media and does not inform local audience of what is happening in their town.

Peter Alexander and Keith Brown of the FCC's study on "Do Local Owners Deliver More Localism?" shows that "the impact of local ownership on the number of local news seconds and local on-location news seconds during each station's half hour local news broadcast suggest that local ownership adds almost five and a half minutes of local news, and over three minutes of on-location news." That quote from the research study shows that locally owned news stations can have more of an impact on a community with their extended local news coverage, than a national news broadcast does. This extra time spent reporting on local events informs the public in that area what is happening in their neighborhood. The study also shows "a local owner may have other economic interests within the community that generate greater levels of local news coverage". The study also shows "if local owners have a lower cost of accessing local advertisers and if there are

complementariness between local advertising and local news, we would expect a local owner to produce more local news coverage.”

Chairman of the FCC Michael Power on August 20, 2003, “advised the Commission on steps it can take and, if warranted, will make legislative recommendations to Congress that would strengthen localism in broadcasting.” This proves even further that the issue of local television ownership limit has to be looked at and sided with the local community instead of on the side of the national corporations.

In Michael K. Powell’s article “Yes, The FCC Should Relax Its Ownership Rules” “instituting our local television multiple ownership rule, the Commission will foster multiple independently owned media outlets in both broadcasting television and radio-advancing the goal of promoting the widest dissemination of viewpoints.” This will diversify local media and enable people to receive local news and obtain public interest in their communities. With more competition among locally owned news stations the communities could also see an increase in advertising cost which will help local economies because it would provide more reasonable competition (instead of local competing against national stations) between the local stations.

In my opinion, national ownership causes less of an interest in the public eye as far as broadcast news is concerned. The localism is left out of the national news and does not apply or show much relevance to those people in a town of 5,000 people. The 1934 Communications Act showed that local news suits the public better than national news and I will agree with that. In my opinion something needs to be done in order to change the local television ownership limit rules in order to keep the local newscast broadcasting to those people in the small communities that make up the United States. The new ownership limit much limit the amount of ownership of national companies that promote non-relevant information to local news broadcasts that do not apply to the stations audience and community.